

 **VA RESEARCH**

Researchers are working to improve care in such ways as:

Reducing hospital readmissions for heart failure patients and promoting their ability to function

Reducing high blood pressure in diabetics

Promoting most effective drug treatments for AIDS patients

Reducing "bad" cholesterol levels in heart disease patients

Advancing drug treatments for psychotic disorders

Increasing access to care for patients with major depression

Focusing on therapy to reduce strokes

Expanding drug therapies to reduce substance abuse

Concentrating on specific rehabilitation issues, including disabilities associated with aging and hearing loss, and the development of better wheelchairs

VA is opening six new centers for Parkinson's disease research, education, and clinical care.

 **VA PREVENTION**

Over the past five years, VA has implemented an extensive preventive-care program to promote the best health outcomes.

Proportions of patients receiving recommended immunizations, cancer screening, counseling for alcohol abuse and smoking have increased between 130% and 500%

VA performance exceeds the private sector in many areas, some of which are:

Breast and cervical cancer screening

Retinal exams to prevent diabetes-induced blindness

30-day follow-up after hospitalization for mental illness

Annual tests to monitor blood sugar control in diabetics

Screening for kidney disease in diabetics

Immunizations for pneumococcal disease and influenza exceed the U.S. goals established in **Healthy People 2000**.

Hypertension patients routinely receive weight and exercise counseling.

85% of primary care patients were screened for high cholesterol.

39% of diabetics and 43% of heart disease patients lowered their "bad" cholesterol to levels which reduce their risk of stroke and heart attack

 **VA ACCESS**

VA has opened Community Based Outpatient Clinics in order to increase access, reduce travel, and decrease waiting times to receive treatment.

Since 1994, Community Based Outpatient Clinics have almost tripled to over 700

Access to care continues to be one of VA's best areas of performance on VA's National Outpatient Satisfaction Survey.

Almost 90% of outpatients report spending as much time as they wanted with their provider.

VA conducts over 250,000 annual telemedicine consultations, providing access to both specialized services and remote areas.

 **VA SAFETY**

VA's National Center for Patient Safety was a finalist in the prestigious 2000 Innovations in American Government Awards Program for initiating an organized approach to ensuring the safety of VA patients.

VA is working with NASA to implement a new **Patient Safety Reporting System** to strengthen the existing VA system.

The new system is modeled after NASA's successful **Aviation Safety Reporting System**, designed to prevent airline crashes by studying close calls



Credentialing is screening, evaluating and authenticating the qualifications of health care providers. VA achieves the benchmark for consistent and efficient credentialing through the use of a new, secure electronic database known as **VetPro**.

"VA's quest to improve quality must be regarded as a laudable success."

*Dr. Stephan D. Fihn, VA Physician,
New England Journal of Medicine, 12-28-00*

"VA is the Leader in Patient Safety."

*Dr. Lucian Leape, Harvard University School of Public
Health, USA Today, 10-11-00*